



Getting to Twin Bridges

By Air

The closest commercial airports to Twin Bridges are in Butte and Bozeman. Flights to Bozeman are the least expensive but you'll find the best deals on car rentals in Butte. Also, Butte is a little closer, only 35 miles from Butte's Bert Mooney Airport to Silver Star. However, over half of the trip is on a winding, mountain road. Bozeman is 72 miles from Silver Star and most of the miles are on the interstate.

If you have your own plane, you can fly right into Twin Bridges and park at Ruby Valley Aviation. The airport is located half a mile from town and the nice folks at Ruby Valley Aviation will be happy to give you a lift.

By Car

From Butte, Montana

Head south on Harrison Avenue. After the 5 Mile Bar (on the left), keep an eye out for the sign to Whitehall (Highway 2). Turn left onto Highway 2 and stay on this road for about 17 miles. You'll be driving over the Continental Divide, through some hairpin turns and switchbacks. Please take your time and mind the speed limit signs. They are posted for your safety, not your annoyance. After the road starts to straighten out, watch for the sign for Twin Bridges. Turn right at this sign and you'll be on Highway 41. Stay on this road for about eight miles. The majestic Tobacco Root Mountains will be on your left. After 8 miles, you'll come to a flashing yellow light at a "T" intersection. Turn right at the intersection. Technically, you've just entered the Ruby Valley.

The first town you'll come to is Silver Star. The pleasant officers of Madison County will give you a ticket if you don't slow to 35 mph going through Silver Star. It's a quiet county, so please slow down. From Silver Star to Twin Bridges, you'll travel adjacent to the Jefferson River.

Twin Bridges is 10 miles south of Silver Star. As you approach the town, you'll see a silver water tower directly ahead. The Ruby Mountains are just to the left of the water tower and the Tobacco Root Mountains are directly to your left. Sweetgrass Rods is the first business on the right as you enter Twin Bridges.

From Bozeman, Montana

Head west on Highway 90 to Whitehall (49 miles). Slow down a bit as you approach the overpass east of Three Forks and look to your left; you'll see the headwaters of the Missouri River. This is a lovely area at any time of year.

At the Whitehall exit, turn left and drive into town. At the "T" intersection, turn right. At the west end of town, you'll see a sign for Twin Bridges. Turn left onto Highway 41 to Twin Bridges. The Tobacco Root Mountains will be on your left. It's about 15 miles from Whitehall to Silver Star. Halfway between Whitehall and Silver Star, you'll see a flashing yellow light and the highway number changes from 55 to 41.

As you're passing through Silver Star, on your right you'll see some unique, massive 19th century mining equipment.

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From West Yellowstone, Montana

Head north out of West Yellowstone on Highways 287 and 191. Eight miles out of town, turn left to continue on Highway 287. If you're traveling in winter, keep an eye out for big horn sheep and elk near the highway. You won't go too far before you're driving next to Hebgen Lake. Following Hebgen Lake is Quake Lake. You might want to pull off at the Ranger's Station and learn how the lake was formed by a devastating earthquake in 1959. After passing Quake Lake, you'll see the Madison River on your left. Unless you're driving in a blizzard, you'll probably see some folks fly fishing in the Madison. You'll be traveling between the Madison Range on your right and the Gravelly Range on your left. The distance from Quake Lake to Ennis is 45 miles. By the time you get to Ennis, you might want to get out and stretch your legs. There's a nice park on your right as you enter the town and there are plenty of art galleries and shops. Or, you can wait until you get to Virginia City to take a stretch and walk through the former territorial capitol of Montana. After driving through downtown Ennis, you'll see a big statue of a fly fisherman; continue west on Highway 287 as you pass this magnificent sculpture.

About 7 miles out of Ennis, you will begin to climb the pass known as the Virginia City Hill. Be aware that this is a steep grade with a large volume of tourist traffic in the summer season. The top of the pass can be very icy in the winter season. As you come down the pass, you'll see the Ruby Valley ahead of you between the Ruby and Tobacco Root Mountain Ranges. There are plenty of fun shops in Virginia City intermingled with vintage 1860's historical displays. Virginia City also has lively evening entertainment with the Virginia City Players (Rated "G") and the Brewery Follies (Rated "R"). At the far end of town, the railroad depot provides train service between Virginia City and Nevada City during the summer. The reconstructed old west ghost town, Nevada City, is two miles to the west. The town has been used as the backdrop for films such as *Little Big Man* and *Return to Lonesome Dove*. If you stop on a weekend, you may be able to catch one of the Living History events.

Continuing west from Nevada City, you'll see really large mounds of rocks where the dredgers churned up the last of the gold after the miners took the easy pickings in the late 1800's. Alder is 7 miles west of Nevada City and you are now officially in the Ruby Valley.

Keep traveling west on Highway 287 through Alder and Sheridan, which is 8 miles west of Alder. Twin Bridges is 8 miles west of Sheridan at the junction of Highway 41 and 287. At the north end of Twin Bridges (Main Street runs north/south), a few blocks past the flashing yellow light, you'll see Sweetgrass Rods on your left. If you see cows, you've gone a bit too far.

From Idaho Falls, Idaho

Head north on Highway 15 toward the Montana/Idaho border. You'll be in Idaho for another 79 miles until you reach the ghost town of Monida. (Someone may be living there now.) Please make sure to check your travel and weather information prior to traveling over Monida Pass in the winter. The pass often closes during severe snow storms. Fifteen miles north of the border is the town of Lima.

Continuing north on Highway 15, you'll see the Clark Canyon Reservoir on your left and probably a few boats in the summer or ice houses in the winter. As you head through the pass after the reservoir, watch the hills to your right for a buffalo standing sentinel. It's a skinny beast but it's always there. It's about 50 miles from Lima to Dillon.

When you reach Dillon, take the second Dillon exit (#63) to Highway 41 and Twin Bridges. A quarter mile from the exit is a stop light at North Montana Street. Turn left onto Highway 41 north. Twin Bridges is 28 miles from Dillon. When you're about halfway to Twin Bridges, you'll cross the

Beaverhead River at the Point of Rocks. This was a primary landmark for Lewis & Clark's guide, Sacajawea, when she was looking for her tribe.

As you come into Twin Bridges, you'll see the Madison County Fairgrounds on your right and the Twin Bridges Bike Camp on your left. At the flashing yellow light, turn left and you will be on Main Street. At the north end of Main Street, on the left, is Sweetgrass Rods. If you see cows, you've gone a bit too far.